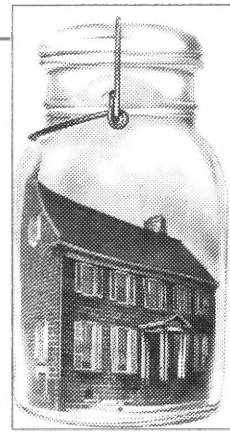


Yesterday's News

FALL 1998



A Publication of The Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee

Our Biggest Birthday Yet! *25 Years of Saving and Making Newark History*

When a few Newarkers began talking in the spring of 1973 about what they could do to save the city's vanishing heritage, they had little sense of where their efforts would lead — or how long they'd last.

But now some of those preservation pioneers, and the many people near and far who later enlisted in the cause, are joining in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee.

The durability of the dream will be displayed in a month-long exhibit opening November 19 on the second floor of the Newark Public Library. Some of the committee's numerous accomplishments, as well as its admitted defeats, are being shown in photos, articles, documents and artifacts. The exhibit was arranged by Charles Cummings, city historian, trustee of NPLC and assistant director of the library.

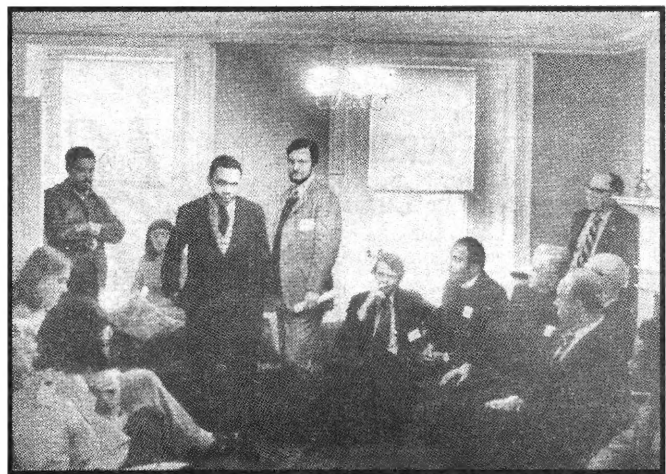
To provide some lasting keepsakes of this milestone, NPLC

commissioned Jersey City artist Richard LaRovere to sketch seven noteworthy buildings and sites, and has published this artwork in note cards and postcards. Orders have been coming in already, and the cards will be available at the Newark Museum's gift shop.

It all began 25 years ago, when a few people in the city's businesses and public and private agencies responded to a call from Donald T. Dust, then editor of the Greater Newark Chamber of Commerce magazine. He asked what they might do together to protect and promote Newark's often-forsaken landmarks.

A series of planning sessions resulted in the formation of the Committee at a well-publicized session on November 26, 1973, in the 1725 Plume House, one of the city's oldest structures. Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson helped set up the group and urged its first members to "save the best of our past."

Dust became the chairman of the first 11-member board, which included a number of civic leaders. One of those first trustees, Dr. E. Alma Flagg, a retired educator, is still an active



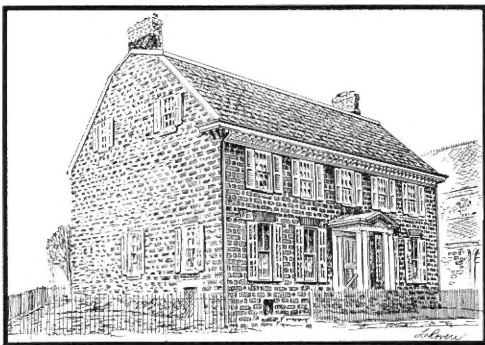
This photo from a 1973 newspaper shows NPLC's first meeting in the Plume House. Mayor Kenneth Gibson is speaking, and Committee founder Donald Dust is just to the right.

member of the board. Another early trustee, Samuel Miller, then director of The Newark Museum, is returning to Newark to speak at the opening of the library exhibit.

The Committee grew rapidly in the 1970s, incorporating, raising funds, hiring staff, opening an office, issuing publications, and bestowing honors. There were vigorous campaigns — even picket lines — to fight the demolition of venerable buildings.

The 1980s brought leaner budgets and quieter endeavors. But the work has continued without interruption, thanks to the dues payments of several hundred members through the years and various grants and bequests — one of which, just received, is more than \$50,000 (*story on page 3*).

As the library exhibit shows, the



The 1725 Plume House, the rectory of the House of Prayer, hosted NPLC's first meeting in 1973 and is featured on a new postcard published by the Committee.

Continued on back page

Newark Landmarks Through the Years

Here's a chronology of the first quarter-century of the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee:

- 1973- Committee founded by Donald Dust and others; first meeting Nov. 26.
- 1974- Committee becomes nonprofit corporation.
- 1975- First Recognition Awards; James Street houses saved.
- 1976- First newsletters, greeting cards, and tour guides issued; first church tour; first nominations sponsored; first staff hired; Plume House restored by trainees.
- 1977- James Street on N.J. Register; NPLC's first office, 35 James St.; first protest on demolitions.
- 1978- James Street on National Register; first city preservation ordinance; campaigns to save St. James R.C. Church, P.S. auditorium and Broad Street brownstones; Lloyd Houses bought by NPLC.
- 1979- Exhibit on churches at library; old-house parts depot begun; St. James razed; first Lincoln Park July Fest.
- 1980- James Street rehabilitations begun.
- 1981- William Ashby's "Tales Without Hate" published; P.S. auditorium razed.
- 1982- Committee reorganize as all-volunteer group; last staff leaves; campaigns to save Mulberry

Street markets and Gibraltar Building.

- 1983- Lincoln Park on N.J. Register; campaigns to save Krueger Mansion and stop Branch Brook Park auto race.
- 1984- Lincoln Park on National Register; campaigns to save Bleeker Street and Walnut Street houses.
- 1985- New register nominations by consultant Ulana Zakalak; Lloyd Houses sold; first survey of downtown landmarks; city gives \$1 million to Krueger.
- 1986- Campaign to save University Heights churches.
- 1987- Campaign to shift planned arts center out of James Street district; NPLC office to Museum's Polhemus House.
- 1988- Mt. Pleasant Cemetery on National Register; new city landmark ordinance adopted; first NPLC plaques installed; NPLC aids state survey of black historic sites.
- 1989- Arts center site moved east of Broad Street; Jackson Street bridge steam engine goes to Museum.
- 1990- Forest Hill on National Register; Lloyd Houses razed; first city Landmarks Commission appointed; first N.J. Historic Trust grants to Newark sites; Metropolitan Church on N.J. Register.

- 1991- William Ashby dies; state bars Metropolitan demolition.
- 1992- Donald Dust dies; NPLC co-sponsors Metropolitan study; Bethany Church lost; first honorary NPLC trustee, D.J. Henderson; campaign to save South Park Church.
- 1993- First Donald Dust award; N.J. Historical Society acquires Essex Club; apartments open in old Tiffany factory.
- 1994- First Borglum statues on National Register; city landmark ordinance strengthened; NPLC's first cash grants to three sites.
- 1995- Greater Newark Conservancy acquires Metropolitan; Ballantine House reopens after renovation; Dust Collection of documents created at Library, NPLC co-sponsors Branch Brook Park map.
- 1996- New edition of "Tales Without Hate"; NPLC co-sponsors Old First Ward exhibit; campaign to save Stephen Crane birthplace; North Broad Street rowhouses on National Register.
- 1997- Lillian Nowicke bequest to NPLC; Aaron Burr memorial at Broad National Bank; Crane site bulldozed; skyscrapers on "Endangered" list.
- 1998- Riverbank Park on National Register; NPLC anniversary exhibit and cards.

Where Is It? What Is It?

One of our longtime members won the photo contest in our spring newsletter by identifying the doorway and ornate lamp in the photo as features of the Gibraltar Building.

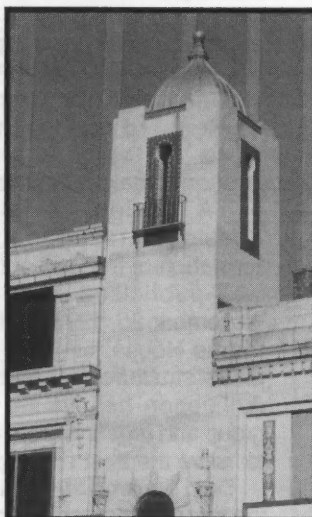
So Dolores Hank of Belleville has received a free year of membership in the Committee. She also correctly noted that the building at Washington and Bank streets was erected in the mid - 1920s.

Gibraltar was designed by the celebrated Cass Gilbert and long served as the massive middle of the Prudential Insurance Company's home office complex. Gibraltar actually was threatened with demolition a decade ago, but now is secure as the home of Superior Court and has been renamed in memory of the late Chief Justice Robert Wilentz.

On to our latest puzzle: This is a much smaller, sprightlier outcropping on the downtown skyline. It is atop a building that started with very lofty ambitions but later led a rather shady life.

The first person to give the name and address of this building wins a year's free membership. In the event of a same-day tie, the edge will go to the entrant who tells the most about this site.

The contest is open to anyone, member or not, who has not won in the past. Send entries to Landmarks Committee, P.O. Box 1066, Newark, NJ 07101.



Yesterday's News

is published three times a year by the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee. Board of Trustees: Rose M. Spears, president; Victoria J. Snoy and Douglas Eldridge, vice presidents; Susan Newberry, secretary; William Mikesell, treasurer; Mildred C. Crump, Charles F. Cummings, Elizabeth Del Tufo, Frank E. Ferruggia, Dr. E. Alma Flagg, Richard Grossklaus, Catherine J. Lenix-Hooker, Donald M. Karp, Mary Sue Sweeney Price and Richard A. Whitten II, trustees.

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To See the Next Historic District, Meet Us at Broad and Market

Broad and Market streets have been the center of Newark since its first settlement more than 332 years ago. Now the intersection could become the center of Newark's next historic district.

The Newark Preservation Landmarks Committee has hired an architectural consultant to prepare a nomination of the Four Corners for the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

The district, extending two or three blocks in each direction from the famed intersection, would contain some of Newark's largest and most noteworthy buildings — including office towers, former department stores, theaters, and some one-of-a-kind small structures.

The Committee's move to create a fifth historic district comes as investors and developers are showing new interest in the old downtown core in the wake of the dramatic success of the N.J. Performing Arts Center.

Listing on the Registers would give added prestige to the downtown and could open the way for tax benefits, but it would not prevent private owners from altering or even demolishing their buildings.

Ula Zakalak, the architectural historian who first envisioned such a district in a 1985 study and is working on the huge nomination, expects all the documents and photos to go to the

state's Historic Preservation Office early in 1999. All the property owners will have to be notified and a public hearing held before approvals are made in Trenton and later in Washington.

NPLC is spending \$14,350 to prepare the nomination, making this the costliest district yet. But the history and design of some 100 buildings in the area must be researched and described for the state's review.

The district would cover between 15 and 20 blocks, depending on the precise final boundaries.

The district will probably have Raymond Boulevard as a border on the north and Mulberry Street on the east, but the southern and western sides may run unevenly along Washington, William and Lafayette streets.

In urging the Committee to focus on the Four Corners, Zakalak called it "the most important eligible historic district in the City of Newark...It is also the most historically and architecturally significant district in the city..."

She noted that Broad and Market has been a significant crossroads since shortly after the first settlers arrived from Connecticut in the 1660s, and was long



Broad and Market, Newark's historic heart.

the commercial and financial hub of New Jersey's largest city. In recent years the core has been eroded, particularly by college development on the west and the Gateway complex on the east. Some of the most precious remaining buildings — such as the century-old Howard Savings Institution — have been defaced with grotesque alterations and garish signs. Some of the major buildings are nearly vacant.

But the area contains the city's tallest structure, the National Newark Essex Building at 744 Broad St., where a \$45 million upgrade is being launched by the Cogswell Realty Group. The firm has also bought the almost-as-tall Raymond-Commerce Building, which may be turned into a high-rise dormitory.

The historic district would include Cass Gilbert's gargoyle-topped Gibraltar Building, the virtually vacant Firemen's and Kinney buildings right at Broad and Market, the mostly empty Bamberger's store, and the long-shuttered but still-intact Paramount, Proctor's and Adams theater auditoriums.

Also scattered around the district are gems that wouldn't probably warrant individual listings on the register. These include the Flemish-style building at 225 Washington St. that once housed a German daily newspaper, the pseudo-Venetian restaurant at 44 Commerce St., and cast-iron and molded-brick structures on Market Street between Broad and Mulberry.

The Landmarks Committee hopes business and government leaders will support the proposed district as an overdue recognition of Newark's historic heart, and a spur and safeguard for the area's future revival.

A Truly Silver Lining

The Landmarks Committee has more than an anniversary to celebrate this year.

The organization has just received the second installment of a bequest from Lillian Nowicke, a self-effacing school-teacher who died in 1996.

This payment of \$26,259 brings to \$50,859 the total amount NPLC has received from her estate. It is by far the largest contribution ever given to the Committee by any source.

Committee officers first learned of Miss Nowicke's bequest only after her death. They are exploring ways to use the funds for a project that can be a fitting memorial.

Miss Nowicke, who died at the age of 90 and left no close relatives, had taught 43 years in Newark schools, mostly at Elliott Street. She was active in a number of religious and historical groups, and remembered several of them in her will.



Lillian Nowicke (at right), shown helping get out a Landmarks Committee mailing about 1980, became our greatest benefactor.

A Newark resident for most of her life, she belonged to the Landmarks Committee since the late 1970s, and served as a volunteer in the group's old office on James Street. The attorney for her estate told us Miss Nowicke was "extremely proud of the work of the Committee."

New Chapters for Historic Churches: • **St. Lucy's Wins State Recognition** •

St. Lucy's Roman Catholic Church, long a hub for Newark's Italian-American community, has been entered on the New Jersey Register of Historic Places.

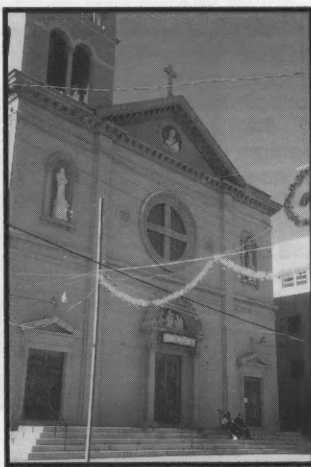
The edifice at Ruggiero Plaza and 7th Avenue is expected to be added soon to the 60-plus entries on the National Register. It is the 30th present or former Newark house of worship to win Register status since 1972, but some of them have since been demolished.

The nomination for the Registers was co-sponsored by the Landmarks Committee and the parish, and was prepared by Ulana Zakalak, an architectural historian.

St. Lucy's has been a focal point of Italian-American life since its surroundings were Newark's teeming "Little Italy." Much of the neighborhood was erased for urban renewal, but the church has endured, and still draws busloads of pilgrims to its street festivals each October in honor of St. Gerard Maiella. The church's elaborate interior includes the national shrine to the saint.

The parish has undergone a revival in recent years as the troubled Columbus Homes housing project was finally levelled, and new low-rise housing has been built — some of it by St. Lucy's.

The parish was founded in 1891 and a small wooden church built to serve the many Italian immigrants in the old 1st Ward. St.



St. Lucy's Church, just after the feast of St. Gerard.

Lucy's was led for 34 years by Rev. Joseph Perotti and 32 years by Rev. Gaetano Ruggiero. The third pastor, Msgr. Joseph Granato, has worked there more than 40 years.

The present church, designed by Neil Convery in a Romanesque revival style,

was dedicated in 1926, but interior work continued for many years. Also in 1926 the shrine of St. Gerard was established to honor the 18th century tailor who served the poor and sick, and is a patron of mothers and children.

St. Gerard's feast day on Oct. 16 is celebrated with four days of special services, street processions behind a century-old statue, and music, food and games.

The church's rather simple classical facade gives little hint of its richly decorated interior, which includes marble altars, jeweled and costumed statues, colorful paintings and mosaics, a barrel vault ceiling, and an altar nearly three stories tall. Also notable are murals by Gonippo Raggi and more than 30 stained-glass windows. Zakalak's nomination says the church is unique in design and craftsmanship.

The nomination describes St. Lucy's as "well-preserved and carefully maintained," and notes that a restoration campaign is under way.

"St. Lucy's continues to be a beacon in the old First Ward," the report concludes, "drawing the descendants of the first Italian immigrants scattered throughout the Northeast, as well as accommodating local residents within its walls."

• *St. Casimir's Rebuilds at Age 90* •

After one of the best and worst years of its history, St. Casimir's Roman Catholic Church has celebrated the 90th year of its founding.

Known as "The Basilica of the Ironbound," the church was entered on the National Register in 1997. But late last year the neoclassical Byzantine structure on Pulaski Street was ravaged by an explosion and fire.

Damage exceeded \$3 million, and the nearby parish hall had to be demolished. Repairs to the church are expected to take several years.

John Dwiboroczyn, a parishioner and active member of NPLC, notes that the lavish interior had just been refurbished before the disaster. The structure, which opened in 1920, suffered extensive smoke and water

damage. "It's an endless job," he said, "but the people have come together."

An historical plaque was given to the parish by the Landmarks Committee in 1995 and is mounted by the main entrance on Pulaski Street.

• *Grace Church Reaches 150* •

Grace Episcopal Church's 150th anniversary celebration has called fresh attention to its architectural and historical importance.

The parish invited architectural historian Constance Griefetto to talk about the church's design at a special program attended by members of the parish and Landmarks Committee.

Grace was designed by Richard Upjohn, famed architect of Trinity Church in lower Manhattan, and was consecrated in 1848. It was one of the

first and greatest of the many Gothic Revival churches built in Newark in the 19th century.

Grace Church, one of only two buildings in Newark with National Landmark designations, is celebrated also as the home of "America the Beautiful." A hymn tune composed in the 1880s by Samuel A. Ward, then organist at the church, later became the melody for the poem by Katharine Lee Bates that many people prefer to the "Star-Spangled Banner" as a national anthem.

Churches at Christmas

Elizabeth Del Tufo will again be leading a holiday tour of Newark churches on Saturday, December 26 -- the day after Christmas.

Del Tufo is chairperson of the city's Landmarks Commission, and a past president of the Landmarks Committee.

A half-dozen churches, all decked out in holiday decor, will be visited.

The tour bus will depart from The Newark Museum at 10:45 a.m. and end about 3 p.m. The cost is \$20. For information and reservations, call Merle Lomrantz at The Museum, 596-6643.

People...

We welcome the following new members in recent months. **Mr. and Mrs. Evaristo Cordero, Stephen Mincieli, and Rosa Jenkins**, all of Newark, and **Patricia Gibbons** of Bloomfield. We also welcome back the scores of old friends who have renewed their memberships for 1998.

We bid a sad farewell to **Edward C. Sosman**, a longtime supporter of NPLC who died at the age of 77 during the summer in his unique Victorian house in Montclair. A brilliant and eccentric retired traffic engineer, Sosman for many years thwarted Montclair officials in their efforts to force him to fix and clean up his picturesque but decaying property, which had been in his family for decades.



Susan Newberry

Susan Newberry, the new secretary of the Newark Landmarks Committee, is devoting many of her days to her role as president of the Durand-Hedden House and Garden Association in Maplewood. The house at 523 Ridgewood Road, which dates in part from the 18th century and was part of a vast plantation, is now owned by the Town of Maplewood. Newberry is a former education director at The Newark Museum.

This year's Newark election produced new terms for two NPLC members, **Mayor Sharpe James** (for a fourth term) and North Ward Councilman **Anthony Carrino** (a seventh term). But the election also resulted in the retirement from public office of an NPLC trustee, **Mildred Crump**. She gave up her at-large seat on the Council to challenge James for the mayoralty. Another NPLC trustee, **Richard Whitten II**, is an aide to newly-elected Central Ward Councilman Cory Booker.

Barbara Sacks, a longtime supporter of the Landmarks Committee, is the new borough manager of Fair Lawn. She formerly was a Newark city official and village manager in South Orange.

...Places...

The New Jersey Historical Society won a 1998 award from the New Jersey Historic Sites Council for its restoration and re-use

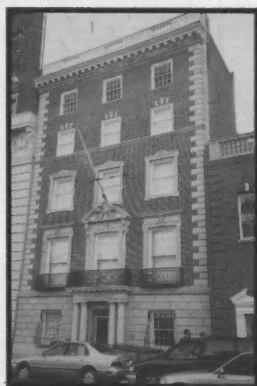
of the old **Essex Club** at 52 Park Place. The council praised the "example of finding a new and compatible use for a potentially obsolete building and making it work, functionally and aesthetically." The 1926 Georgian-style clubhouse was put on the Registers of Historic Places by the Landmarks Committee, a move which opened the way to \$1.25 million in state aid for restoration.

The old Polish National Catholic church that is now artist **Emilio Serio's home and studio** was shown in a full-page picture with a Star-Ledger article about the conversion of churches into dwellings. Serio won a Recognition Award from the Landmarks Committee back in 1981 for his rehabilitation of the little wooden building at 30 Houston St., originally erected in 1879 as a public school. He bought it in 1970.

One by one, the buildings that made the **James Street Commons** area a historic district continue to disappear. The latest to be razed — once again, just for a parking lot — were the remaining houses on the north side of Linden Street. Also gone is the old residential-commercial structure at W. Park and Halsey streets, just across from the historic district. More than 100 buildings have been destroyed since James Street went on the National Register 20 years ago.

Also gone is another part of the **Clark Thread Mills** which once occupied several blocks along the Passaic River at the height of Newark's 19th century industrial boom. The factory at Clark Street and McCarter Highway was destroyed by fire in September. More fortunate have been the Clark buildings across the river in East Newark, which are on the National Register, and Newark's William Clark Mansion, home of the North Ward Center.

A well-publicized tour of Cass Gilbert's Woolworth Building and other notable structures in lower Manhattan was a reminder that the famed architect (1859-1934) also has an important legacy in Newark: The **Essex County Courthouse** (1906), currently undergoing restoration, the **National State Bank** building (1912) at 810 Broad St., one of the city's first skyscrapers; and the **Gibraltar Building** (1926), built by the Prudential and now partly a courthouse.



Essex Club

...Things

The Newark Landmarks & Historic Preservation Commission — a city agency often confused with our Committee — has issued a new edition of "**Landmark Designation: A Guide for Owners of Historic Properties** in Newark, N.J." The six-page pamphlet tells, in question-answer form, how owners can comply with the city ordinance regulating changes to designated landmarks. Copies are available from the Division of City Planning, 55 Liberty St., 3rd floor, Newark, NJ 07102; telephone 733-4828.

The city's engineering director has agreed with NPLC that the **Founders Monument** in Fairmount Cemetery should be rehabilitated but not moved to a more visible site. NPLC President Rose Spears, responding to a letter from a concerned Jersey City man, urged city officials to do some overdue repairs on the monument, but to leave it at its present site and not disturb the resting place of Newark's early settlers. The monument, surmounted by a statue of a Puritan, was erected in 1889 when remains were removed to Fairmount from a Broad Street graveyard.

The ghastly new facade of the "**Wee Bee Kids**" store in the old Howard Savings Bank at Broad St. has drawn a cry of "Yikes!" from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The group's national magazine carries before-and-after color pictures of the once-handsome 1899 building, and observes: "Architecture and the English language take hits on Broad Street in Newark, N.J."

A 1939 Graham sedan owned by Howard Wiseman was featured in a recent parade for a movie premiere in Maplewood. Wiseman has owned the bright yellow sedan since the early 1980s, and brings it out for parades and special events. Wiseman is a charter member of the Newark Landmarks Committee, and a retired librarian from the New Jersey Historical Society and the Newark Public Library.



Victoria Snoy, past president of the Landmarks Committee, was one of three officers who gave out literature and sold books in Military Park at the Newark Festival of People. This year's event was chaired by Richard Grossakaus, also a longtime trustee of NPLC.

25 Years of Saving

Continued from front page

Committee has taken the lead in making people aware of the city's architectural treasures. Many of Newark's 60-plus entries on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places were sponsored by the Committee, including the James Street Commons, Lincoln Park and Forest Hill historic districts.

Informative plaques have been installed on two dozen sites by NPLC. And the individuals and groups who've toiled to save these landmarks have been encouraged with NPLC's annual Recognition Awards. The Plume House was restored in a unique project to train inner-city youth new skills.

The Committee has fought hard to save threatened sites — from the old Public Service auditorium on Park Place in the 1970s to Riverbank Park in the 1990s. In perhaps its biggest victory, NPLC helped prevent the demolition of the old Metropolitan Baptist Church on Prince Street, the oldest synagogue building in Newark. A more recent achievement was winning National Register protection for Riverbank Park.

Another victory — less tangible, but extremely important — was the creation of an official landmarks commission by the city government, after years of appeals from the Committee.

As the new exhibit also shows, there were losses, too. More than 100 buildings in the James Street district were among the registered landmarks lost since 1973. The biggest heart-breaker for the Committee was the razing of the 1830s Lloyd Houses on University Avenue, which NPLC had purchased and struggled to restore.

Also featured in the library exhibit are the Committee's many publications, from tour guides to a bumper sticker emblazoned, "Newark Landmarks — Love 'em or Lose 'em." Most noteworthy, of course, is "Tales Without Hate," the memoirs of NPLC founder William M. Ashby, which was published in two editions by NPLC.

While NPLC rejoices in its anniversary, the agenda is no emptier than in 1973. A major historic district, centered on Broad and Market streets, is being prepared (*See page 3*). More plaques, awards and tours are planned.

And there are still enough battles to be fought. Too many of our major landmarks — such as Symphony Hall, the Krueger Mansion, the nearby Feigenspan Mansion, Murphy Varnish, the Watts, Campbell factory, and the remains of South Park Presbyterian Church — face uncertain futures.

We've stayed the course and won the Silver. Now we have to go for the Gold!

Tourist Attractions



To launch its 25th anniversary, the Landmarks Committee sponsored a tour of three historic homes and several notable sites. A small but enthusiastic group saw Lisa Adams point out the original woodwork in the 1712 Sydenham House, Newark's oldest private home, and heard Charles Cummings describe some of the notables buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery.



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The Newark Preservation & Landmarks Committee

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Happy 25th
Birthday
Issue